

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

If I Were a Girl.

If I were a girl, but warned and guided by the knowledge of life that comes with mature years, there are some things frequently done by well-intentioned girls in this year of grace that I would try to leave undone, and some other things frequently neglected by them that I would try to do.

If I were a girl, I would determine to have, if possible, a sound, healthy, well-knit body. I would not ruin my digestion by eating caramels, nor my nerves by keeping late hours, nor my lungs by breathing bad air and wearing uncomfortable clothing. I would have my regular hours for eating and sleeping, and not be tempted from them oftener than once or twice a year. I would have my own ideas of what was sensible, economical, and appropriate in dress, and never be tempted from them on any occasion.

If I were a girl, I would learn as early as possible to do the homely duties which come to the vast majority of women sooner or later. I would learn to make and mend my own clothes, to sweep and dust and iron and cook, and to do all these things so easily and well that the doing could never be drudgery.

If I were a girl, I would not make a confidential friend of a new acquaintance. I would know just as many pleasant people as it was possible for me to know, but I would try them for a long, long time before I began to share my innermost thoughts and feelings with them.

If I were a girl, I would try very hard to keep my lips clear of slang, hasty words, and stupid gossip. I would not seek a reputation for vivacity and "smartness" at the expense of candor and kindness. I would resolve, and resolve with all my might, to say what I meant, and to mean what I said. It pays to be positive.

If I were a girl, I would learn some things about the events and the prominent characters and questions of the day. I would learn to place the central figures of history, to know whether Socrates was a Greek or a Roman, and how and where Joan of Arc achieved immortality. I would not go through life tortured by an ignorance which may be remedied wherever the English language is known and the public library is accessible.

If I were a girl, I would not spend hours in reading light novels, even harmless ones, when the same time wisely used would give me a lifelong acquaintance with Shakespeare, Milton, Burns, Scott, Thackeray, Macaulay, Dickens, George Eliot, Hawthorne, the Brownings, Tennyson, Lowell, and still others of the wrong of literature. If I were a girl, I would be a Christian, and I would not be ashamed to own that name. If I could not be a solemn and influential Christian, I would be content to be an ordinary Christian girl, and wait for

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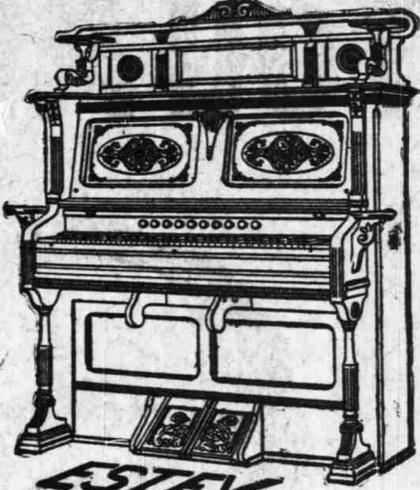
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time and training to do the rest. I would try not to make myself and my religion offensive by cant and "goodishness," but I would try to have it understood which side I was on and why I was there.

To put it briefly, if I were a girl, and if youth could look forward as easily as later life can look backward, I would begin to be in girlhood what I shall wish in old age I had become.

For the achievement it is necessary but to speak and live up to a resolute, "I will!"—Selected.

Queer Things About Animals.

Few of us, I think, realize how many wild creatures there are which live, like the famous showman, P. T. Barnum, did, by "fooling the public." There are millions of creatures whose very existence depends upon their appearing to be something which they are not. This deceptive appearance is called "mimicry," and the creatures which profit by it are said to "mimic" those things which they resemble. Generally speaking, mimicry is of two kinds—"aggressive" and "protective." In the Far North, where the ground is almost perpetually covered with snow, and where a dark object may be seen for miles, we find the polar bear, the snowy owl and other creatures mimicking the snow, their resemblance to which gives them a chance to approach their prey unseen; but in order that they may not have an undue advantage over the defenseless creatures which they use for food, we find the Arctic hare and other small animals also mimicking the snow, in order that they may sometimes escape the sharp eyes of their enemies. Further south, however, you will notice that white wild animals are very uncommon; they would be so conspicuous that they would be unable either to approach their prey or avoid their enemies. So instead, some of them mimic the sand and pebbles of the beach, the brown leaves of the woods and the moss-covered rocks and tree-trunks.—June Woman's Home Companion.

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